

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 OMB-01 /092 W

-----151045Z 075152 /12

P 150815Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6691

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, IS, JO

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ATTITUDES TOWARD A PALESTINIAN STATE

BEGIN SUMMARY: ISRAELIS ARE ADMANTLY OPPOSED TO A
SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK AND
WHEN THEY SPEAK OF TRADING SOME TERRITORY THERE FOR
PEACE, THAT TRADE WOULD BE ONLY WITH JORDAN. THEIR
OPPOSITION STEMS FROM ANCIENT, AND RECENT, HISTORY
BUT IT IS PRIMARILY A REFLECTION OF ISRAELI:DETERMIN-
ATION NEVER AGAIN TO PERMIT THE WEST BANK TO BECOME
A BASE FOR TERRORISTS' ATTACKS AGAINST ISRAEL.THIS
DETERMINATION HAS BEEN REINFORCED BY ISRAELI
PERCEPTION THAT THE PLO WOULD MOVE DIRECTLY INTO ANY
EVACUATED TERRITORY AND THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR HAS
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UNDERScoreD THE DANGER INHERENT IN SUCH A
DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY

1. ISRAELI ATTITUDES TOWARD A SEPARATE PALESTINIAN
STATE HAVE CHANGED OVER THREE HISTORICAL PERIODS:
PRE-1950, 1950-1967, AND POST-1967. THE PALESTINE
JEWISH COMMUNITY HAD HOTLY DEBATED THE PEEL

COMMISSION'S STILL-BORN PARTITION PROPOSAL IN THE LATE 1930'S. IN THEIR ARGUMENTS WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, ZIONISTS MAINTAINED THAT THE TERRITORY OF THE ORIGINAL MANDATE HAD ALREADY BEEN ONCE PARTITIONED WHEN A SEPARATE ADMINISTRATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1922 FOR TRANS-JORDAN AND THAT AREA WAS EXCLUDED FROM THE JEWISH NATIONAL HOME PROVISIONS OF THE MANDATE. IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE MANDATE, THE IDEA THAT AN INDEPENDENT ARAB ENTITY WOULD SHARE THE TERRITORY OF MANDATED "WESTERN" PALESTINE WITH A PROPOSED JEWISH STATE WAS RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED BY THE MAINSTREAM OF ZIONIST LEADERSHIP. (HOWEVER, MENACHEM BEGIN AND HIS FELLOW "REVISIONISTS" NEVER ACCEPTED PARTITION AND WERE, EVEN THEN, CLAIMING THAT ALL OF ERETZ YISRAEL--INCLUDING BOTH BANKS OF THE JORDAN RIVER--WERE RIGHTFULLY PROMISED BY BALFOUR TO THE JEWS AS THEIR NATIONAL HOME.) LOOKING BACK ON THIS PERIOD, ISRAELIS ARGUE THAT IT WAS THE ARABS WHO FINALLY MADE THE ISSUE MOOT BY REJECTING THE 1947 U.N. PARTITION PLAN, WHICH ISRAEL HAD ACCEPTED.

2. FROM 1950 TO 1967 THE SUBJECT OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINE WAS A DEAD ISSUE. KING ABDULLAH ANNEXED THE WEST BANK IN 1950, AN ANNEXATION WHICH WAS NOT RECOGNIZED BY THE OTHER ARAB STATES BECAUSE OF THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM, NOR BY THE PALESTINIANS, NOR, INDEED BY ANYONE EXCEPT BRITAIN AND PAKISTAN. IN THE SUCCEEDING YEARS, HOWEVER,

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AS THE ISRAELIS PREFER TO SEE IT, THE PALESTINIANS MORE OR LESS BECAME JORDANIANS AND THE JORDANIANS MORE OR LESS BECAME PALESTINIANS, AND ALL LEARNED TO LIVE WITH THE STATUS QUO. MOST ISRAELIS, ALBEIT RELUCTANTLY, CAME TO ACCEPT THE REALITY OF ISRAEL AND JORDAN SHARING THE AREA. THEY ALSO HAD TO LIVE WITH THE REALITY OF CONTINUING TERRORIST ATTACKS FROM THE WEST BANK.

3. THE SIX DAY WAR DRASTICALLY ALTERED THE SITUATION. AND ALL ISRAELIS STRESS THAT IT WAS JORDAN WHICH ATTACKED IN JERUSALEM, NOT ISRAEL, DESPITE A DESPERATE ISRAELI EFFORT TO PERSUADE HUSSEIN TO STAY OUT OF THE CONFLICT. ISRAELI EUPHORIA EVIDENT IN THE EARLY MONTHS AFTER THE WAR (WHEN THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WAS WAITING FOR A "PHONE CALL" FROM HUSSEIN) QUICKLY FADED AS IT BECAME CLEAR THAT AN AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK WAS NOT LIKELY. THE QUESTION OF A THIRD STATE BEGAN TO SURFACE AGAIN AS

ISRAEL CONSIDERED THE FUTURE OF THE TERRITORIES. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL FIRST ANNOUNCED IN LATE 1967 ITS POLICY THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO THIRD STATE BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE JORDAN. YIGAL ALLON THEN PUT FORWARD HIS PLAN AND, ALTHOUGH IT WAS NEVER OFFICIALLY ADOPTED OR REJECTED, IT HAS BEEN THE CLOSEST THING TO GOVERNMENT POLICY ON THIS SUBJECT. THE EMERGENCE OF THE "NEW" PLO IN 1968, ITS HEYDAY IN JORDAN IN 1969 AND 1970, AND ITS EXTENSIVE USE OF TERROR CONVINCED ISRAELIS THAT THEY WERE RIGHT IN OPPOSING ANY STATE WHICH MIGHT COME

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UNDER THE RULE OF THIS ORGANIZATION.

4. OPPOSITION TO A THIRD STATE BECAME AN INTENSE ISSUE IN ISRAEL AFTER THE 1973 WAR. THE OCTOBER 1974 RABAT CONFERENCE DECISION THAT ONLY THE PLO COULD SPEAK FOR THE PALESTINIANS REINFORCED THE ISRAELI DETERMINATION TO OPPOSE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT THIRD STATE. ISRAELIS CLAIM THAT IN THE

PAST YEAR OR TWO ARAB SUPPORT FOR A THIRD STATE HAS BEEN WAVERING AS THE PLO LOST GROUND IN LEBANON AND AS INSISTENCE ON PLO REPRESENTATION AND A STATE SEEMED TO BLOCK ANY CHANCE OF RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. ISRAELIS PORTRAYED SDAT'S ENDORSEMENT OF TIES BETWEEN JORDAN AND A WEST BANK ENTITY AS A VINDICATION OF ISRAELI FIRMNESS IN ITS POLICY.

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5. OPPOSITION TO AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE HAS THUS BEEN GOVERNMENT POLICY CONSISTENTLY SINCE 1967, A POLICY STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF ISRAELIS. FOR EXAMPLE, A DAVAR EDITORIAL STATED ON JUNE 9 THAT "...THE DECISIVE MAJORITY OF ISRAEL'S POPULATION IS UNITED IN ITS OPPOSITION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE IN THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP AND TO A WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 LINES." IF ONE LOOKS AT THE MAY 17 ELECTION RESULTS, ONLY SEVEN OF THE 120 KNESSET SEATS WERE WON BY PARTIES (RAKAH AND SHELLI) WHICH WOULD FIND A THIRD STATE ACCEPTABLE, AND MOST OF THAT VOTE WAS PROBABLY FROM ISRAELI ARABS.

6. THIS OPPOSITION IS BASED PRIMARILY ON SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ISRAELI CITIZENS, AND THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER IS AMONG THEM, WHO ALSO INVOKE HISTORIC AND RELIGIOUS TIES. THEY ARGUE THAT ISRAEL'S HISTORIC RIGHT TO THE WEST BANK (JUDEA AND SAMARIA) IS AT LEAST AS STRONG AS ITS RIGHT TO ANY OTHER PART OF FORMER MANDATE PALESTINE, AND THAT THE 1967 WAR WAS AN UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY FOR ISRAEL TO REGAIN WHAT WAS RIGHTFULLY ITS HERITAGE--THE HEARTLAND OF ANCIENT ISRAEL. MORE ISRAELIS BASE THEIR OPPOSITION TO A THIRD STATE PRIMARILY ON THE CONSIDERATION THAT ISRAELI CONTROL, IF NOT JURISDICTION, OVER THE WEST BANK IS THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN ENSURE THAT ISRAEL'S POPULATION CENTERS, FARMS AND TRANSPORTATION LINKS CAN BE PROTECTED FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS. ISRAELIS REMEMBER BITTERLY THE ATTACKS AGAINST THEM FROM THE WEST BANK IN THE YEARS PRIOR TO 1967 AND ARE ADAMANT THAT SUCH A SITUATION CAN NEVER AGAIN BE PERMITTED. VERY FEW ISRAELIS BELIEVE THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD SET ASIDE THEIR DESIGNS ON THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN EXCHANGE FOR A "MINI-STATE." AS MOSHE DAYAN SAYS,

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"THEY DON'T WANT TO RETURN TO NABLUS. THEY WANT TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES IN HAIFA AND JAFFA AND LYDDA." ISRAELIS ALSO ARGUE THAT WHAT WOULD BE LEFT AFTER AN ADJUSTMENT OF DEFENSE BORDERS UNDER ITS ALON PLAN, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD NOT BE VIABLE FOR A THIRD STATE, AND CEDING ALL OR NEARLY ALL THE WEST BANK FOR A THIRD STATE WOULD LEAVE ISRAEL DISASTROUSLY VULNERABLE TO A FUTURE ARAB ONSLAUGHT. HERE THE SEVERE ISRAELI LOSSES IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE 1973 WAR ADD GREAT EMOTIONAL WEIGHT TO THE ARGUMENT.

.7. THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR HAS HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON ISRAELI THINKING TOWARD THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. THAT WAR HAS RECONFIRMED THE ISRAELI CONVICTION THAT A NATION MUST BE CAPABLE OF DEFENDING ITSELF WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP. MOREOVER, IT HAS underscored IN ISRAELI MINDS THE DANGER FOR ANY NATION IN HAVING TO DEAL WITH HIGHLY VOLATILE AND IRREDENTIST PALESTINIANS. THE MANAGING EDITOR OF THE HAARETZ, A WELL KNOWN DOVE, TOLD US LAST WEEK, FOR INSTANCE, THAT HE HAD CHANGED HIS MIND ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A THIRD STATE AS A RESULT OF THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR. WHEREAS TWO YEARS AGO HE HAD BEEN WILLING TO CONSIDER IT AS AN OPTION WHICH ISRAEL MIGHT EVENTUALLY HAVE TO ACCEPT, HE NOW FELT THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT ALLOW ITSELF TO TAKE THIS KIND OF RISK.

8. IF ONE WERE TO ASK THE AVERAGE ISRAELI IF HE WISHED TO RETAIN THE WEST BANK, WE BELIEVE THAT HE WOULD REPLY, UNDER THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, YES. IF HE WERE ASKED IF HE WOULD BE WILLING TO GIVE UP SOME OF THE WEST BANK FOR PEACE, HE PROBABLY WOULD REPLY THAT IT WOULD DEPEND ON THE PACKAGE. A PRIMARY COMPONENT OF THAT PACKAGE WOULD BE THAT GIVING UP THE TERRITORIES COULD ONLY BE DONE UNDER CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WOULD ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEE FREEDOM FROM TERRORISM. IN SUM, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHILE IT IS CLEAR TO US THAT THERE IS A WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF MANY ISRAELIS TO TRADE SOME WEST BANK TERRITORY FOR REAL PEACE, THAT ONLY APPLIES IF THE PARTNER WITH WHOM THE TRADE IS TO BE MADE IS NOT THE PLO, BUT JORDAN.

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Message Attributes

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